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March 25, 1958

TO: The Secretary

THROUGH: S/S

FROM: EUR - C. Burke Elbrick

SUBJECT: Proposed Reply to Soviet Aide-Memoire of
March 5, 1958 Protesting Alleged US
Intrusion in Soviet Air Space

In our view, it was not coincidental that Menshikov handed you this protest simultaneously with the delivery of Bulganin's last letter to President Eisenhower on March 6, 1958; or that Gromyko asked about a reply on the occasion of delivering to Ambassador Thompson on March 24, 1958, the USSR's latest Aide-Memoire on a summit conference.

It is clear from the terms of the Aide-Memoire that:

(1) The Soviets consider that they have convincing proofs of the intrusion charged

(2) It was written with a view to possible release and calculated to play on popular fears of the "accidental" loosing of atomic war.

An item in the Soviet press on March 22 suggests that the groundwork is being laid for possibly public charges, at an appropriate juncture in Moscow's summit conference campaign, that the US is engaging in war-like acts while the Soviet Union is making great efforts to relax tensions and promote the cause of peace. The item was reported briefly as follows by our Embassy in Moscow: "Most papers carry Tass London item on Labor MP Allon's criticism of Soviet border incidents allegedly intentionally provoked by US and British aircraft."

The recent intimations that the Soviets might be preparing for a unilateral declaration suspending atom tests on production of hydrogen weapons (Moscow's 1634, March 24) may indicate another facet of the same

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projected propaganda campaign.

In the circumstances, it seems important that:

(1) We simply deny the Soviet charges of intrusion, reaffirming our peaceful intentions but avoiding any reference to the Soviet allegations respecting flights of planes armed with thermo-nuclear bombs; and

(2) We be prepared to move immediately to discredit any public charges or alleged "evidence" the Soviets might release by appropriate reference to such previous charges and fabricated "evidence" as figured in the "germ warfare" campaign.

RECOMMENDATION:

(1) That you approve the attached Aide-Memoire and authorize me to deliver it to Soviet Ambassador Menshikov.

(2) That you authorize preparation to refute and discredit any public charges which might be made.

EUR:FKKohler:bsm

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